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Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 OMB-01 AID-20 GAC-01 ACDA-19 MBFR-03 SAJ-01

NIC-01 RSR-01 /157 W
---------- 051582
R 121330 Z APR 73
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7920
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 4028

E. O. 11652: N/ A
TAGS: PFOR, SO, UR
SUBJ: SOVIET VIEWS ON SOMALI- ETHIOPIAN TENSIONS

REF: MOGADISCIO 483

1. SUMMARY. SOVIET SCHOLARS HAVE GIVEN US WHAT WE PRESUME TO BE OFFICIAL SOVIET LINE: THEY FAVOR PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT WITHOUT BORDER CHANGES BUT WITH FLEXIBLE TREATMENT OF LOCAL MIGRATING TRIBES. SOMALI AMBASSADOR CALLED ON PRESIDENT PODGORNY APRIL 10. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING CALL AT AFRICAN INSTITUTE APRIL 11 BY HERBERT SPIRO OF S/ PC, ACCOMPANIED BY EMBOFF, OPPORTUNITY AROSE TO PROBE FOR SOVIET VIEWS ON CURRENT ETHIOPIAN/ SOMALI BORDER TENSION. SOVIET SCHOLARS LED BY DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTE, STAVROSHENKO, SEEMD PRIMED FOR THE SUBJECT. THEY STRESSED SOVIET COMMITMENT TO PEACEFUL SETTELEMENT OF SUCH BORDER ISSUES. STAVROSHENKO MADE FOLLOWING POINTS:
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A. MOSCOW SUPPORTS BORDERS IN AFRICAN AS SET UP WHEN COUNTREIS ATTAINED INDEPENDENCE.

B. AS REGARDS SOMALI/ ETHIOPIAN ISSUE, IT IS SOVIET VIEW THAT CONFLICT CAN BE RESOLVED WITHOUT CHAGE IN CURRENT BORDER IF BOTH SIDES CAN SEE THEIR WAYS TO WORK OUT ARRANGMENT WHICH WILL TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION LEGITIMATE NEEDS OF MIGRATING TRIBAL PEOPLE WHOSE LIVELIHOOD DEPENDS ON ABILITY TO CROSS BORDER FOR SEASONAL GRAZING OF FLOCKS.

C. IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR ETHIOPIAN AND SOMALI GOVERNMENTS TO ARRANGE MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY FINANACIL COMPENSATION FOR SUCH TRIBAL USE OFGRAZING LANDS ACROSS THE BORDER; MOROCCA, ALGERIAN AGREEMENT PROVIDES PRECEDENT FOR SETTLING SIMILAR BORDER PROBLEM.

3. SOVIET MEDIA THUS FAR HAVE REMAINED SILENT ABOUT ETHIOPIAN/ SOMALI BORDER TENSION. PRAVDA, ON APRIL 11, HOWEVER, REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT PODGORNY RECEIVED SOMALI AMBASSADOR ON APRIL 10. WHILE PRAVDA SIMPLY STATES THAT KREMLIN MEETING WAS HELD TO DISCUSS " FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS AND COOPERATION," WE PRESUME BORDER TENSION WITH ETHIOPIA WAS ONE OF TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION. CONCEIVABLY SOMALI AMBASSADOR' S CALL AT KREMLIN COULD BE SIGN THAT PLANS ARE AFOOT FOR HIGH LEVEL VISIT. APPEARANCE OF LENGTHY, FAVORABLE ARTICLE ON SOMALIA IN SAME ISSUE OF PRAVDA ENCOURAGES SUCH SPECULATION SINCE SOVIET PRESS GROUNDWORK FOR VISITS OFTEN FOLLOWS THIS PATTERN.

4. COMMENT: VIEWS EXPRESSED BY AFRICAN INSTITUTE SHCOLARS PRESUMABLY REFLECT CURRENT SOVIET LINE FOR USE WITH BOTH SOMALIS AND ETHIOPIANS, PUTTING STRESSON NEED TO RESPECT EXISITING BORDERS AND TO SEEK SOLUTION ON MOROCCO/ ALGERIA MODEL. WE WOULD EXPECT THAT SOVIETS WOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT TENSIONS WHICH COULD THREATEN TO EMBROIL THEM AND THAT THEIR INCLINATION WOULD BE TO TRY TO DAMPEN DOWN BORDER TENSIONS AND THUS AVOID AGGRAVATING ETHIOPIA' S ALREADY WELL- KNOWN SUSPICISIONS OF SOVIET MOTIVES IN THE REGION.
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